فارة الصحة
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MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

HEALTH IN KUWAIT

Prepared by

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Foreword

The people of Kuwait have been benevolence-seeking in nature. Despite its small size, both geographically and in population, this unique feature of its people has always led them to seek ways and means to establish a welfare state in every aspect of life. Free education, free access to health services and providing all the needy with other social and humanitarian services have flourished profoundly. These motives have been the main driving force in guiding the principles on which our health services are built. So great is the feeling of Kuwaiti population towards these concepts that every one considers attaining them as an undisputable right.

The State of Kuwait has developed a comprehensive and responsive Public Health System. Although the concept of modern health care dates back to the year 1912. the year in which the first clinic was established, the health delivery system entered into a new era with the independence of Kuwait in 1961. The Ministry of Public Health was established the same year. The period since independence has seen tremendous development in health services. The growth of services has been so rapid that it is fair to say that the parallel of this development is to be found in very few other countries in the world.

At the forefront of the many factors contributing to the development of health care services in the State of Kuwait has been the close personal attention paid by the ruling family to the needs of the public and the fulfilment of those needs. Three of the ruling family members had direct responsibility of running the health services during the period 1936 to 1961. The first was Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah, the 11th ruler of Kuwait. His brother, Sheikh Fahed Al Salem Al Sabah, followed him for sometime. Then Sheikh Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah, the 12th ruler of Kuwait, was in charge of the Department of Health and had very valuable contribution to its development before changing it into a nanistry. To the present date, the unfailing support accorded by His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah. has made the Kuwaiti health system the envy of many around the world. Without such support and continuous

guidance, the great strides taken in the last decade to develop a high quality medical care system could not have been possible.

I have been privileged to be the leader of a very hard-working team in the Ministry of Public Health, in my capacity as the Public Health Minister since 1975. The overall growth and the valuable development achieved during the period of my predecessors have been consolidated; every effort has been made to enhance the momentum already gained. We have learnt from the experience of previous years; and the lessons learnt have been used to modify and improve the health care delivery system.

The achievements of the past, which will go a long way to serve the future generations of Kuwait, need to be preserved not only in terms of further improvements and advancements in the system, but also by means of an appropriate documentation of the various stages in our endeavours to make the State of Kuwait a truly welfare state. It is towards the achievement of this essential organizational need that this book has been written.

The book *has* been prepared as *a result* of extensive and dedicated efforts. I avail myself of this opportunity to offer my personal appreciation to Dr. Ahmad and for the team working *with*

him to achieve such a fine document of the long Naim, Director, Planning Department, for the idea of preparing this manuscript strides taken by Kuwait to reach where it is in the field of health care delivery to comprehensive information on the history of the development of the health its people. I am sure that it will serve a useful purpose in presenting services, a description *of the health* system as it operates today, patterns of use of health services, the current health status of our people, the significance of and approaches to health planning in Kuwait, and the future outlook for our health care delivery system.

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I must say our people have been lucky to be able to enjoy a considerably high standard of medical care services. All this has been developed due to the resources

which were made available to the Ministry. It is very important to realize that no government can continue to provide the health services free of charge forever. It is known that a time will come when some limits must be prevent misuse and overutilization. We have to be prepared to support the standard of health care that we have already achieved. Under no circumstances we should sacrifice quality for quantity. To find the best way for maintaining a high standard of care and preventing the escalation of cost, full support from the people, both morally and financially, will be the only hope that can save the future of health care in our country. This is the greatest challenge that we must fight together to achieve.

I reiterate my thanks to the staff of the Planning Department for rendering a valuable service to the Ministry of Public Health. I am sure that many, both within and outside Kuwait, will benefit immensely from this book.

September
1986

Dr. Abdul Rahman Al Awadi Minister of Public Health

Preface

During the almost three decades of my involvement in the development of the health care delivery system in Kuwait, I have seen many changes. Over these years, the Ministry of Public Health has developed into a very impressive and well run system. While the physical growth and associated changes can easily be documented, the overall development of the system is an extremely intricate process that is better appreciated by those who have been involved in it. I have been privileged not only to be associated with

the various developments, but also to have had the honour of contributing actively towards many of them.

Over the years I have been considering the pros and cons of the need to prepare an account of the various phases of development that the health care delivery system in Kuwait has experienced. My idea was duly appreciated and welcomed by His Excellency, Dr. Abdul Rahman Al Awadi, Minister of Public Health. Being a developmental planner, he gave me the necessary encourage- ment and support for bringing the idea to a material reality. We decided to publish the book in 1986, because that year carries a special significance for the Ministry of Public Health: It marks the golden jubilee of the establishment of the Department of Health: which was created in 1936; and the silver jubilee of the Ministry of Public Health, which was established in 1961. The professional staff of the Department of Planning also welcomed the idea and accepted the challenge of completing the manuscript in time for publication in 1986. This book is the result of their sincere efforts.

I am indeed grateful to His Excellency, Dr. Abdul Rahman Al Awadi, Minister of Public Health, Dr. Na'il Al Naqeeb, Undersecretary, and Dr. Tareq F. Al Abdul Jader, Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Affairs for their much needed encouragement and support in completing the manuscript. Dr. Tareq, based on his extensive review of the manuscript, offered some extremely useful additions and modifications. These changes have contributed to improving the quality of the book; and I am grateful to him for his valuable contribution.

This book would not have been completed if it were not for the untiring efforts of my professional colleagues in my department: Dr. Makhdoom Ali Shah, Consultant, Dr. Ramsis Abdel Aleem Gomaa, Expert, and Dr. Nasra M. Shah, Expert. They have demonstrated rare professional commitment in completing the document in a very short time. **Dr.** Makhdoom Ali **Shah** and Dr. Nasra M. Shah, assisted by Mr. Srinivas Murthy, Specialist, prepared the manuscript in English. Dr. Makhdoom Ali Shah was responsible for the production of the English version. **Dr. Ramsis A. Gomaa** prepared the Arabic manuscript and was responsible for its production.

All the other members of the staff of the Department of Planning contributed towards the completion of the manuscript to the best of their abilities. I thank them

all.

A number of departments and divisions of the Ministry of Public Health provided information for this book. Their cooperation and accommodation are highly appreciated. Many others rendered help and contributed in ways even they may not fully realize... I thank them all.

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1986

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Dr. Ahmad Naim
Director, Planning Department Ministry of Public Health

Foreword
Preface
Tables
Figures
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Contents

Purpose of the Book
Organization of the Book
Introduction to Kuwait
Government in Kuwait
Topography
Climate and Weather conditions in Kuwait
Demographic Characteristics
Housing
Labour Force and Employment
Education
The University of Kuwait
Medical and Paramedical Education
The Faculty of Medicine
Faculty of Allied Health Sciences and

Nursing
Nursing Institute, Ministry of Public Health Kuwait
Institute for Health Sciences.
Ministry of Education
Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialities Adult
Literacy Programme
Economics
Agriculture
Livestock
Fisheries
Petroleum
Indust
ry
Social Services
CHAPTER 2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT
Prior to 1912
1913 - 1948
1949-1960
1961-1974
1975 to Present
Health Services Today
Primary Health Care
Secondary Health Care
Tertiary Care
Emergency Medical Services
Regionalization: An Organizational Innovation
The Service Delivery System in a Region
Health Centres
Speciality Clinics
General Hospitals
Specialized Care

1

1

2

3

3

4

5

7
10
11
11
13
13
13
13
14
14
15
15
16
17
18
18
19
19
20
21
21
21

22
23
23
26
26
26
27
27
27
28
28
29
29
29
CHAPTER 3 THE *HEALTH* SYSTEM TODAY
Philosophy and Policies
Objectives
Organization
Office of H.E. The Minister of Public Health
Office of the Undersecretary
Offices of the Assistant Undersecretaries
The Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Affairs
The Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs
The Assistant Undersecretary for Financial Affairs
The Assistant Undersecretary for Pharmaceutics and Medical Equipments
The Assistant Undersecretary for General Services
Services Provided by the Ministry of Public Health
Primary Health Care Facilities and Services
31
31
33

33
33
33
34
34
34
34
34
34
36
36
36
Health Centres
Maternal and Child Care Services
37
Maternal Care Centres
38
School Health Services
38
Police Health Affairs Services
39
Diabetes Clinics
39
Ambulance and Radio Communication Services 39
Health Registration Section.
40
Family Practice Training Unit
40
Secondary Health Care Facilities
41
Al Sabah Hospital
41
Al Amiri Hospital
Al Jahra Hospital
Al Adan
Hospital

Tertiary Care Facilities

Maternity Hospital

42

Al Farwaniya Hospital

Mubarak Al Kabir Hospital

43

43

4

3

44

50

Chest Diseases Hospital

Surgeries

Al Razi Orthopaedic Hospital

Hospital for Psychiatric

Medicine

Ibn Sina Hospital for

Specialized

50

50

50

Sulaibikhat Hospital for

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

59

50

52

52

Infectious Diseases Hospital

Chest Diseases Chmic **and**

Tuberculosis Prevention Linit

The Kuwait Centre for Cancer Control

Kuwait Centre for Allergic Diseases

32
52
54
Kidney Centre
54
Kuwait Dermatology Centre
55
Genetics Centre
55
Speech and Hearing Treatment Centre
55
The Centre for Islamic Medicine
Hospital
Beds
Dental Services
Dental Preventive Programme
60
Training
60
Future Programmes
61
Other Services Provided by the
Ministry of Public Health
61
Traini
ng
61
Health Education
Family Planning
Services
Environmental Health
Radiation Control
Preventive Health Services
32188
64
Nutrition and Catering
Hotel Services
67
Rodent Control Services
Health Services for Ports and Borders
69
Blood Bank
Pharmaceutical Factory
Prosthetics Manufacturing

Centre
71
Central Sterilization Department
71
Services Provided by other Ministries
Ministry of Education
Institute for the Blind
Institute for the Deaf
73
Institute for Paralytics
Vocational Rehabilitation Institutes
Institute for Care of the Retarded
73
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour
ddd ddddd
73
73
73
73
73
73
Ministry of Planning
The Municipality of Kuwait
Services Provided by the Private Sector
Manpower
Cost and Budget
CHAPTER 4 SERVICE UTILIZATION AND

CURRENT HEALTH
STATUS
Introduction
Hospital Admissions
Outpatient Visits
Hospital Morbidity
Disability
Mortality
Causes of Death
CHAPTER 5 THE KUWAIT HEALTH PLAN
History and Development of Health Planning in Kuwait
First stage: Writing down a general framework for the country's Health
熊
KS
86
96
102
104
106
108
113
11
3
Plan along with policies and strategies upto the year 2000
117
Second stage: Preparation of the National Health Plan of Kuwait till the year 2000
117
Third stage: The implementation, follow-up, evaluation, and updating of the Plan

Objectives 118

Involvement of Citizens
Long-term or Strategic Objectives
Importance of Health Planning and Development 119 119

1990

Construction and Maintenance of Buildings
Medium Term Objectives
Promotion of Individual and Community Health Status
Manpower for Health Services
Systems' Development

Policies and Strategies
Projects
Construction Projects
Projects for which a budget was approved in 1984-1985 122 123 127 127

127
119
120
120
121
121
122
Projects for which a budget was approved in 1985-1986
128
First priority projects among the Five Year Plan (1985-19909 for which a budget is requested for 1986-1987
128
Non-Construction Projects
129
Project for a Health Survey of the Population of Kuwait
129
CHAPTER 6 OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE
Regionalization
Norms and standards
Kuwaitization of Manpower
131
131
133
Quality control
133
134
Expansions and Improvements of Facilities
135
Replacement
136
Tertiary Care Facilities

Improving Technologies and Services 136
Other Innovations 137
Automated Maintenance System 137
Internal Communication System 137
Audio-Visual Nurse call System 138
Intercom System 138
Public Address System 138
Monitoring and Security System 139
Closed circuit TV System 139
Outpatient Audio Digital Paging System 139
Staff Location (Paging) System 139
Fire Alarm System 139
Slow Scan System 139
Emergency Telemetry System 139
Ambulance Wireless System 140
Medical Records System 140
Other Services 140
Organizational Development 141
Post Graduate Education and Training 141
Health Registration System 142
Integrated Health Information System 143
143

144

REFERENCES

ABOUT THE **AUTHORS**

149

155

seen *in* the health services extended to Sulaibikhat area (Al Amiri hospital annex), *and* the expansion of the services of health centres and Mother

and Child Health Care centres to the Hawally and Fahaheel areas.

Kuwait gained independence in 1961 and the Department of Health prepared for the transition into the Ministry of Public Health, which took over the responsibility of providing health care services to citizens and expatriates. This major change in the political situation of the country had a big effect on the health services. This is evident from the

establishment of several new hospitals and expansion of some others, in the sixties. This phase included the Chest Diseases hospital, the Old Maternity hospital in Sharq (which later on moved to its present location in Sulaibikhat in 1968), Al Sabah hospital, the expansion of Al Amiri hospital and the change of its annex in Sulaibikhat into the Orthopaedic need for an increase in the number of beds became apparent with a gain in the number of health centres, the establishment of polyclinics, and with increased activities of the growing number of Mother and Child Health Care centres. The services of the Preventive Medical Centres were expanded as

were those of the School Health Service to include all the newly populated areas and to accommodate the increase in the number of schools in those days.

hospital, a
new

Psychiatric hospital, and a new Tropical Diseases hospital. The

In early sixties, the planning of health services was based on simple methods, which had prevailed since the thirties when such services began. This depended largely, as observed earlier, on simple observations and reports and some simple statistical data and other information derived locally, coupled with some inputs from the experience of other countries.

The Ministry of Public Health, while following these simple basis for health planning, had some interaction and as such coordination with other ministries and sectors such as ministries of Public Works, Education. Finance, and the Kuwait Municipality. Generally speaking, the municipality would determine the best locations for setting up a health service, the Ministry of Public Works would construct the necessary building, and the Ministry of Finance would provide finances for the commissioning and putting into operation the building. The assistance of the Ministry of Education was sought for training the manpower required. Census data were used for obtaining demographic estimates for meeting the health needs of a growing population.

During the late sixties, the awareness of an overall planning system became more prominent which accounted for the setting up of a new financial and social plan for the

country. This was, however, the first attempt in this direction and was followed by a second attempt in the mid seventies. Neither of these attempts proved successful in the formulation of an overall developmental plan for the Country since they lacked reliable and valid information necessary for developing

of the new hospitals. Thus, in an unprecedented expansion in the health care expansion in its activities centered around the establishment and commissioning an operational plan. The Ministry of Public Health nonetheless carried out a vast

services, the Ministry of Public Health undertook a mammoth project whereby seven new hospitals were built and commissioned. These were: Al Farwaniya, Al Jahra, Al Adan, Mubarak Al Kabir, and Ibn Sina

hospitals, opened on the

115

hospitals, opened on the occasion of the national day in 1984. Besides these occasion of the national day (February 25) in 1981, and Al Razi and Al Amiri hospitals, several other health related establishments were set up, including the Kuwait Centre for Cancer Control, the Kuwait Centre for Allergic Diseases, and

other specialized health centres, to name a few.

health services in Kuwait, the responsible administrators of the Ministry put During this period, which is considered a turning point in the history of forward a plan whereby health services would be distributed throughout the it and supervising the system whereby these services were provided. However, country according to health regions, each serving the populated area surrounding special services related to planning, orientation, direction, and

training were to remain entirely within the domain of the centralized sectors of the Ministry. The centralized sectors were also to act as coordinators between various regions. It was decided that specialized services which cannot be provided in health regions, would be provided by the Sabah General Centre for Medical Specialities. This new approach to health delivery system was seen as the most logical and desirable one for the circumstances of the country. Hence a suitable plan for the implementation of such a project became inevitable.

The plan was based on the division of Kuwait into five health regions Al Farwaniya, Al Adan, Al Jahra, Mubarak Al Kabir, and Al Amiri. In addition. the Sabah General Centre for Medical Specialities was to provide the tertiary care. The plan was thus implemented with the provision of the supportive technical, administrative, and financial services. However, the need for a formal plan was soon felt by the policy makers. The idea of a formal plan was in line with the thinking of WHO and other international agencies regarding the need for health plans in order to achieve the WHO's goal of health for all by the year 2000. The idea of a new health system for Kuwait based on a plan also coincided with a new trend in the economic and social developmental processes in Kuwait, which

took a rapid turn over a short period of time. Consequently, in 1978, the Ministry of Public Health began setting up general goals for health planning, with the following guideliness:

1. Adopting an effective scientific system for health planning, which would provide for the population's health needs.
2. Encouraging the participation of various sectors and representatives of the people in the decision making process as it related to health planning.
3. Encouraging the Ministry of Public Health's personnel and enabling them to take up an active role in the development of the plans for their respective organizational units.
4. Preparing a health plan for Kuwait which would document the outline of the problems as well as priorities in the development of an efficient health care delivery system.

In 1979, a group of planners was formed within the Ministry of Public from outside the ministry as well. An Executive Committee and four Health, which

infact became the Committee for Planning, and included members

DR. **TAREQ F. AL-ABDULJADER**
M.B.B.Ch., M.S.P.H.

Dr. Tareq F. Al-AbdulJader got his M.B.B.Ch. degree from Alexandria University, Egypt in 1973. He earned his M.S.P.H. from the Meharry Medical College, U.S.A. in 1978.

In 1974, he took Rotational Internship for one year at the Alexandria University Hospitals in Egypt. He joined the Ministry of Public Health in 1975 and worked as Assistant Registrar in Dermatology at the Sabah Hospital. In 1976, he became a Registrar in the same hospital. In 1978, he assumed the position of Deputy Director, Regional Hospitals' Administration. He continued in this position till 1982, when he was made Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Affairs of the Ministry of Public Health.

He has taken a number of courses in the United States of America and U.K. in Hospital Administration, Health Planning, Microfilming in Medical Records. Productivity Measurement and other Administrative and Management issues. He has worked as a Member of various Technical Committees and participated in a number of International Conferences.

His publications have been in the areas of manpower development, consumers' satisfaction, and health services planning in Kuwait.

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F.R.C.O.G. (**U.K.**), F.I.C.S. **(U.S.A.)**,
F.A.C.S. (**U.S.A.)**

Dr. Ahmed K. Naim got his M.B., Ch.B. degree from Cairo University in 1943. He worked in Cairo University Hospital from 1944 to 1947 as House Officer and later as Registrar in Gynaecology & Obstetrics. He joined Ein Shams University, Cairo in 1947 and taught till 1957 in Gynaecology & Obstetrics, Faculty of Medicine. He joined the Ministry of Public Health, Kuwait, in 1957. Over the years he has worked as Head, Gynaecology & Obstetrics Department of Amiri Hospital (1957-1961), Senior Consultant and Director, Old maternity Hospital (1961-1968), Senior Consultant and Director, New Maternity Hospital (1968-1977). He was also in charge of the Maternal and Child Health Centres during 1961-1968.

In 1977, he was appointed the Director of Central Administration, which was entrusted with the overall responsibility of commissioning of seven new hospitals and two specialized centres. In 1982, he was appointed the Director, Office of National Health Planning, which has now been changed to a department. At present he is the Director, Department of Planning.

Dr. Ahmed Naim's publications are predominantly in the field of Gynaecology and Obstetrics. Besides, he has several studies in hospital commis- sioning and health services systems development.